Monday, December 16, 2013

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SLE-EP IN HEAV-ENLY PEAS

DECODING OFT-MISUNDERSTOOD X-MAS CAROLS PAGE 16

House fire claims two lives

Police investigate a Claymore Avenue blaze that took the lives of two women and left several others injured PAGE 3

'A great tree has fallen'

Thousands flock to Nelson Mandela's funeral — a mix of Xhosa tribal tradition, Christian symbolism and military pomp — to pay their last respects PAGE 6

Matthew Barthe holds up his Presto card that he says has given him nothing but trouble since he started using it earlier this month. TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

Bugs? Presto doesn't have bugs, official says

'Carnival of silliness.' Two Presto users who beg to differ share their horror stories with Metro

TREVOR GREENWAY
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Two OC Transpo users who got kicked off the bus — one on her way to a doctor's appointment and another repeatedly for his Presto card not working — say they are fed up with the system's glitches, but a Presto official refuses to acknowledge problems, despite a promised 2.2 update that the city says will make the card easier to use.

Deborah Sevigny had started riding the bus this summer after slowly recovering from a broken pelvis she got in a cycling crash with a car.

On her way to a doctor's appointment her Presto card glitched and she was booted from the bus.

"I'm standing there, going to my doctor's appointment, cane in hand with a broken pelvis and he's telling me in front of all these people 'Just get off the bus and go inside and get the card checked,'" said Sevigny.

She made several calls to Presto and OC Transpo. There was $16 left on her card, but nobody could explain the problem.

She said OC Transpo and Presto just pass the buck and she'll never take the bus again.

Things haven't been much smoother for Matthew Barthe.

He signed up for the auto-load feature in December, paid $122 for a monthly pass, then his card never worked.

Presto had no record of his transaction until a few days later, but the card still wouldn't work. Barthe was forced to send the card in to Presto and shell out another $50 to get to work while Presto fixed things.

Now he's fighting to get a $50 refund, but it likely won't happen before Christmas.

"It's just such a headache for commuters," said Barthe. "What a carnival of silliness — I can't believe it."

Rob Hollis, executive vice-president of Presto, said the issue with cards not working has nothing to do with the system but with users' unfamiliarity with the features. He objected to saying there were "bugs" within the system.

"From out point of view, the functionality in Presto is actually working exceptionally well in Ottawa," said Hollis. "There aren't really any systematic problems per se, but we have rolled out very rapidly in Ottawa."

He said Presto's 2.2 update coming in the new year will allow auto-load transactions to come through every four hours, instead of the current 24-hour wait, and he's confident that will make the system run smoother for everyone.

Toy mountain looking more like molehill

Salvation Army says it needs waaaay more toy donations to make wishes come true this holiday season PAGE 4

Where are they now? The feline edition

Momo the cat captured the heart of the world paw-dling to safety during the Alberta floods, but he's been keeping it pretty low-pro since, his human says PAGE 10

For the misanthrope on your list

They're not discovering the true meaning of Christmas or anything, but these movies DO have homicidal pranksters and dystopian futures PAGE 18

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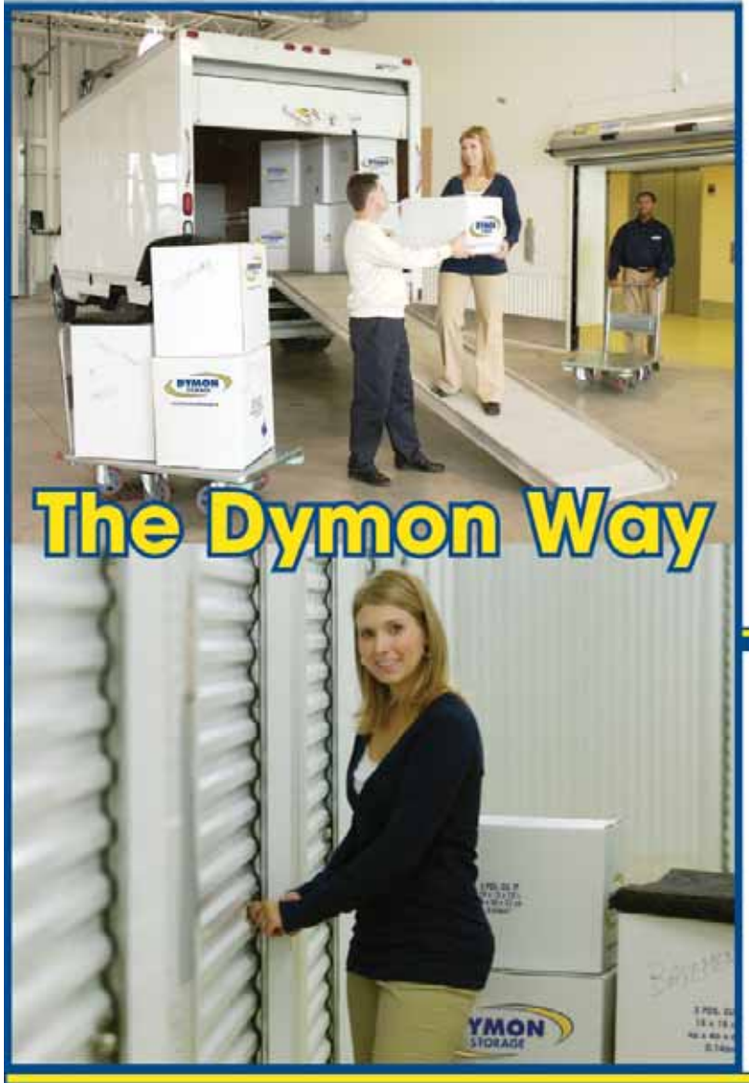

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Arrested

Ottawa man planned to have sex with kids: Cops

A 30-year-old Ottawa man has been arrested on child pornography charges after he showed up at a downtown hotel to have sex with a woman and her two young children, police say.

The man set up a liaison with a woman online to have sex with her and her kids, but the woman was actually an undercover cop. Police arrested the man at the hotel Friday.

Brendan David Clark has been charged with possession of child pornography and making arrangements to commit a sexual offence against a child.

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

Drug-trafficking charges

Arrest made after police drug raid

A 52-year-old Ottawa man has been charged with trafficking crack cocaine after police executed a search warrant at his home in the 200 block of Durocher Street Friday.

Investigators seized an undisclosed amount of crack cocaine.

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

New additions

Redblacks stock up ahead of draft

The Ottawa Redblacks announced they added two running backs to the team's pre-season roster: Michael Hayes from the University of Houston Cougars, and Eric O'Neal from the Coastal Carolina University Chanticleers. METRO

A coroner walks inside the home of a fatal fire at 1396 Claymor Ave. in Ottawa on Saturday. Two young women died and several others were injured in the early-morning blaze. MIKE CARROCCETTO/FOR METRO

Morning blaze leaves 2 young women dead

Cause unknown. House contained three women and a man, all in their 20s, and three teen girls

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Investigators are trying to determine what caused a house fire on Claymor Avenue early Saturday morning that killed two young women and sent five others to hospital with hyperthermia and smoke inhalation.

The fire broke out just before 3 a.m. and quickly spread to the rest of the duplex at 1396 Claymor Ave.

When paramedics arrived, several occupants who had managed to escape the blaze were standing outside in -30 C weather with minimal clothing and no footwear.

Paramedics began wrapping patients in their uniforms and treated them for hypothermia and smoke inhalation. But two women aged 23 and 21 years old were trapped inside and didn't make it out of the blaze in time.

"It's so tragic," said next-door neighbour Helen King, who awoke at 3 a.m. to frantic screaming.

"I could hear her, she was hysterical."

Three teenaged girls, a 20-year-old man and a 21-year-old pregnant woman were also sent to hospital for hypothermia and smoke inhalation.

A 57-year-old firefighter was treated for cuts to his leg.

Fire crews battled the blaze for hours until they finally quelled the flames just after 6 a.m.

King knew a couple of the students who lived next door, but has no idea if her neighbours made it out or if they were the ones trapped inside.

"I don't know which ones are gone," said an emotional King.

"I knew two of them to say hello to, but I don't know if that is them."

The names of the victims have not been released and Ottawa Police Staff Sgt. Rick Kiendel said it would be up to the victims' families to release their identities. He said Sunday morning that Ontario fire marshals were still on the scene, trying to determine where and how the blaze started.

"They're going through things. Everything is covered in ice, so they are going through that right now," he said.

Waking up to screams

"It's so tragic.... I could hear her, she was hysterical."

Next-door neighbour Helen King, who awoke to screams in the early morning

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Domestic dispute

Cop charged with assault with a weapon

An Ottawa Police officer has been arrested and charged with two counts of criminal harassment and assault with a weapon for a domestic dispute that occurred some time between May and December of this year.

Police won't release the officer's name to protect the victim's privacy, but the officer has been placed on administrative duties with strict conditions pending the outcome of the charges.

"This matter is before the courts and it is important that we respect due process," said Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau in a release. "The Ottawa Police Service expects the conduct of all officers to be of the highest standard and reflective of the values of our community."

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

Two awards

Awesome Ottawa supports planters and concerts

Awesome Ottawa is giving two awards this month, one to Gail McGuire and the Brook Tower Tenant Circle to support neighbourhood planters to provide free herbs and other edibles to people in the Brooke Tower at Cartier and Gladstone. The second award went to Megan Johnson and Jacob Caines to support "innovative community concerts," put on through their volunteer group Sesquisharp. Sesquisharp's 2013-14 season will finish with an evening of rotating conductors, and a short tour of Eastern Ontario with a concert of cabaret music. METRO

Toy Mountain facing steep climb in demand

'Never seen such a low point.' Salvation Army says donations falling short of need

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There are more than 16,000 people looking for help this Christmas with putting toys under the tree, and the Toy Mountain campaign is running short.

"It was quite shocking on Friday to see the empty tables when should have been full," said Sean Maddox, director of public relations for the Salvation Army, the charity behind the toy drive.

On Friday, volunteers from area TD banks came in to sort gifts, but had nothing to do until the afternoon when a truck arrived with donations collected at TD branches.

"We've never seen such a low point. We're hoping it's cyclical and more donations will come in this week," said Maddox.

Maddox said registrations started off "very strong and very fast" this year, with the city's 211 service eventually saying it couldn't keep registering requests. The Salvation Army then said people would need to register to receive toys for their kids by going in person to the toy distribution centre located at 2615 Lancaster Road Unit 29.

Maddox said people have given generously and the Salvation Army is a little more than two-thirds of the way through its planned distribution, with about 10,000 toys or toy packages distributed as of last weekend.

However, he said the Salvation Army has seen requests for help grow steadily at about five per cent per year for the last several years — a situation he says the organization doesn't expect to change in the near term given the economic turmoil and job cutbacks at the federal government.

"You don't see people reach out for services immediately either. It's only after they've gone through their savings," he said.

He said the Salvation Army is asking people who can to give generously, but within their means.

The Toy Mountain logo is featured on a downloadable poster people can use to set up a toy drive in their workplaces. For more information go to toymountain.ca CONTRIBUTED

Where to go

People can continue to donate new, unwrapped toys at the following locations:

- Bell Media Ottawa, 87 George St., Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. to Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- All TD Canada Trust locations in Ottawa
- Customer Service kiosks during mall hours at Carlingwood Shopping Centre and St. Laurent Centre.

'Tis the sweeeeason

Kevin O'Grady pushes his son, Collin, 4, and daughter Megan, 7, on a sled down a hill at the Dominion Arboretum as his friend Javier Jorge watches. A winter storm dropped at least 15 centimetres of snow on Ottawa Saturday night and through Sunday, making the sledding a bit slower than usual. Environment Canada forecast today will be a mix of sun and cloud with a high of -17C.

SEAN MCKIBBON/METRO

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A Zulu warrior plays a bugle as people gather during the funeral service of Nelson Mandela in Qunu, South Africa, Sunday. Insets: Around South Africa, people stopped to watch the funeral. From top left, people in Nelson Mandela Square; Vilakazi restaurant staff; resident John Kunene; Stedman Graham, Oprah Winfrey and Sir Richard Branson; a girl at the Orlando Stadium in Johannesburg; Prince Charles speaking with Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. ANTOINE DE RAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS; INSETS: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

Nelson Mandela laid to rest

Solemnity and joy. Several thousand gather to take part in ceremonies for beloved former president and anti-apartheid hero

Nelson Mandela was buried in his home village on Sunday after a funeral that mixed ancient tribal rituals with a display of the might of the new, integrated South Africa.

Military officers rolled Mandela's flag-draped coffin to the family burial plot in the village of Qunu as formations of planes and military helicopters flew over the hills where thousands of mourners had gathered.

Unlike the public memorial on Tuesday at a stadium that was rife with problems, the funeral and burial went smoothly. The ceremonies mixed solemnity with joy at Mandela's accomplishments, lasted all morning and into the afternoon and were fit for African royalty.

Several thousand gathered in a huge white tent at the Mandela family compound for the state funeral that preceded a private service at the gravesite. Songs, speeches and the boom of artillery rang across the fields.

Mandela's widow, Graca Machel, wipes her eyes during the service. ODD ANDERSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mandela, who spent 27 years in jail as a prisoner of the racist white government and emerged to lead a transition to a multiracial democracy, died on Dec. 5 at the age of 95 after a long illness.

His portrait looked over the assembly in the tent from behind a bank of 95 candles representing each year of his remarkable life. His casket, transported to the tent on a gun carriage, rested on a carpet of cow skins below a lectern where speakers delivered eulogies.

Ahmed Kathrada, an anti-apartheid activist who was jailed on Robben Island with Mandela, remembered his old friend's "abundant reserves" of love, patience and tolerance. He said it was painful when he saw Mandela for the last time, months ago in his hospital bed. Some listeners wiped away tears as Kathrada spoke.

"He tightly held my hand, it was profoundly heartbreaking," Kathrada said, his voice quavering with emotion. "How I wish I never had to confront what I saw. I first met him 67 years ago and I recall the tall, healthy strong man, the boxer, the prisoner who easily wielded the pick and shovel when we couldn't do so."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nelson Mandela's casket is taken out of the makeshift dome where his funeral service was held in Qunu, South Africa, Sunday. ODD ANDERSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'A great tree has fallen'

In contrast to the military pomp, some speakers evoked the traditions of the Xhosa tribe, to which Mandela's Thembu clan belongs.

- "A great tree has fallen, he is now going home to rest with his forefathers," said Chief Ngangomhlaba Matanzima, a representative of Mandela's family.
- Another speaker, Zolani Mkiva, served for many years as Mandela's praise singer, a traditional role. "The bones of our ancestors are vibrating. The waves of African oceans are reverberating," he said.

Xhosa

Tribal rituals on display in Qunu

Nelson Mandela's casket was draped in a lion skin, an ox was ritually slaughtered and a family elder kept talking to the body's spirit: The state funeral for Nelson Mandela on Sunday included these rituals from the tradition of the Xhosa tribe, to whom Mandela's Thembu clan belongs.

Mandela's coffin was wrapped in the South African flag, standing atop animal skins during the funeral in Mandela's southeastern childhood village of Qunu. The ceremony was an eclectic mix of traditional rituals, Christian elements and the military honours of a state funeral.

His body was buried around noon, "when the sun is at its highest and the shadow at its shortest," Cyril Ramaphosa, deputy leader of the country's ruling party, the African National Congress, said during the ceremony.

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Offer is transferable to a family member living in the same household (proof of address required). This offer may not be redeemed for cash and may not be combined with certain other consumer incentives available on GM vehicles. The $1,000 credit includes HST/GST/QST/PST as applicable by province. As part of the transaction, dealer will request current vehicle registration and/or insurance to prove ownership. GMCL reserves the right to amend or terminate this offer, in whole or in part, at any time without prior notice. Void where prohibited by law. Additional conditions and limitations apply. See your GM dealer for details

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*These savings offers exclude items with prices ending in .97, '3 for' panties.

NE123G213 © 2013. Sears Canada Inc.

About 200,000 pro-EU activists gather on Sunday in Independence Square in Kyiv around posters of jailed Ukrainian former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. SERGEI GRITS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukrainian activists press EU demands

Four weeks strong.
Protests have grown in size, intensity after two violent police dispersals

About 200,000 anti-government protesters converged on the central square of Ukraine's capital Sunday in a dramatic show of morale after nearly four weeks of daily protests, but the rally was shadowed by suggestions that their goal of closer ties with Europe may be imperilled.

A much smaller demonstration of government supporters, about 15,000, was taking place about a kilometre away from Kyiv's Independence Square. Anti-government protesters have set up an extensive tent camp there and erected barricades of snow hardened with freezing water and studded with scrap wood and junk.

U.S. senators John McCain and Chris Murphy joined the anti-government demonstration to express support for them and their European ambitions, threatening sanctions against the government of President Viktor Yanukovych if authorities use more violence to disperse the protests.

The protests began Nov. 21 after Yanukovych announced he was backing away from signing a long-awaited agreement to deepen trade and political ties with the EU and instead focus on Russia.

In the face of the protests, Ukrainian officials this week renewed talks with the EU and promised that they would sign the deal once some issues are worked out. However, EU official Stefan Fuele cast doubt on the prospect Sunday, saying on his Twitter account that work is "on hold."

Yanukovych backed off the agreement on the grounds that the EU was not providing adequate compensation to his economically struggling nation for potential trades losses with Russia. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sweden

28 detained after neo-Nazi attack on demonstration

Swedish police detained 28 people Sunday after a group of neo-Nazis attacked an anti-Nazism demonstration in a Stockholm suburb by hurling bottles, torches and firecrackers.

Two people were hospitalized and a police officer was injured in the back after being hit by a heavy object, police spokesman Sven-Erik Olsson said. Olsson said around 200 people participated in the rally when they were attacked by a group of about 40. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India. Activists protest recriminalizing of gay sex

Hundreds of gay-rights activists gathered in India's capital and other cities across the country on Sunday to protest a decision by India's top court to uphold a law that criminalizes gay sex.

India's Supreme Court last week reversed a landmark 2009 lower court order that had decriminalized gay sex. The country's gay community is demanding the government take immediate action to remove the colonial-era law.

About 800 protesters in New Delhi wore black arm bands and waved rainbow-coloured flags and banners. Some people wore masks and wigs to protect their identity.

The law bans gay sex and makes it punishable by up to a decade in prison. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An activist protests a verdict that upheld the criminalization of homosexuality. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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East Coasters in the slush: Snow followed by rain makes a mess

Don those wellies.
Nova Scotia sees pre-Christmas snow for first time in 3 years

HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax

The combination of snow and rain on Sunday had many people in the East Coast shovelling their driveways so they wouldn't be stuck Monday morning.

Karen Ramsland of Halifax cleared her driveway around 1 p.m. so the snow wouldn't be too heavy to lift once the rain started.

"I'm loving it. I'm actually one of those people that likes the snow," Ramsland said.

Environment Canada Meteorologist Jean-Marc Couturier said the Halifax region got about 15 centimetres of snow by mid-afternoon, then ice pellets and rain began turning the snow into slush by 3 p.m. onwards.

Halifax Regional Police responded to 10 reports of accidents in the urban area, but no injuries were reported.

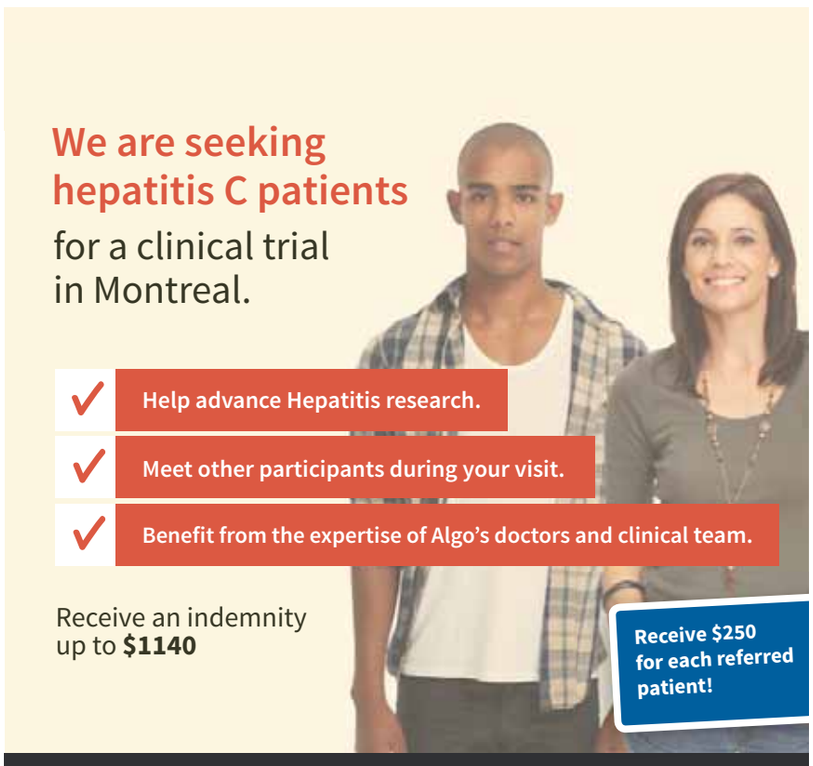
Stormy weather

The same storm system dumped 15 to 25 centimetres of snow in parts of southern Ontario on Saturday.

- Dozens of flights through Toronto Pearson International Airport were delayed or cancelled over the weekend.
- The storm then made its way to southern Quebec late Saturday and into Sunday, dumping up to 30 centimetres of snow in some areas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Near-blizzard conditions didn't stop Julie Wiseman, left, Anna Marie Kaiser and Tabitha Bainbridge from getting in a 10-kilometre run along the St. Margaret's Bay Trail Sunday morning in Halifax. JEFF HARPER/METRO IN HALIFAX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Limelight fades for flood-hopping feline

Momo the cat has been living a quiet life since gaining global celebrity status when he leapt from a submerged pickup truck and swam for his life in floodwaters that hit southern Alberta last June.

Momo and his human, Kevan Yeats, were in Yeats's truck on a partially submerged street in High River when disaster struck. Yeats had been at work when the flooding started and he went back to his apartment to pick up Momo.

The truck hit a deep spot on the road and was quickly swamped by water washing through the community from the Highwood River.

Yeats smashed out the back window of the cab and hopped into the truck bed with the then-eight-month-old cat in his arms.

Momo jumped from Yeats's arms into the water and started paw-paddling to safety, his tiny wet head poking just above the surface.

The moment was captured by a photographer with The Canadian Press and the images garnered international media attention as a symbol of hope amidst the devastating flooding.

Kevan Yeats and his cat, Momo, in Okotoks, Alta. Yeats helped rescue Momo after his truck fell into a sinkhole during June's floods. BILL GRAVELAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"It was a deep spot on the street really and it just sucked me under. Looking back on it you kind of think, yeah, that was close," said Yeats in a recent interview at his parents' home in Okotoks, south of Calgary.

Yeats said Momo didn't seem to suffer any trauma from his swim.

"The next day he was fine and jumped in the shower — same old cat."

Yeats said the attention he received at the time has faded.

And some people have questioned the sanity of going back to High River to save his cat.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Sheriff: Colorado school gunman threatened teacher in September

Arapahoe High School.
Teen shooter may have been nursing a grudge leading up to attack

Sean Sweeney, a runner who lives near Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colo., pauses to say a prayer for the victims and the gunman of a shooting at the school during his early morning run on Saturday. DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Investigators believe the gunman who entered Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colorado, on Friday was looking for a teacher with whom he had a dispute.

Karl Pierson, 18, may have been nursing a grudge against the teacher — a librarian and head of the school debate team — since September. Pierson was on the team and had been disciplined by the librarian for reasons yet to be disclosed, County Sheriff Grayson Robinson said. He said Pierson had threatened the teacher in September.

Pierson fired six shots from a pump-action shotgun between the moment he walked into Arapahoe High School on and the moment he killed himself in a library as a school security officer closed in on him, Robinson said.

Arapahoe senior Claire Davis, 17, who was sitting with a friend when Pierson entered the library, was shot in the head. She remained hospitalized in critical condition Sunday.

Robinson has said investigators think Davis was shot at random by Pierson.

Pierson legally bought a shotgun on Dec. 6 at a local store, and he purchased ammunition the morning of the shootings. Anyone 18 and older is allowed to buy a shotgun in Colorado; only those over 21 can legally buy a handgun.

Pierson arrived at the school toting the shotgun and wearing the ammunition on his body. In a backpack he carried three Molotov cocktails.

Pierson managed to ignite one Molotov cocktail inside the school library before he killed himself as a fast-acting school security officer, a deputy sheriff, closed in, Robinson said.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper noted Sunday that Pierson was not a loner but cautioned that the investigation was in its early stages. "He didn't seem to have a mental illness," the governor said. "He had a lot of friends, he was outspoken. But again, there's no rhyme or reason. We can't - there's nothing that says, ah, now I understand."

Pierson's attack lasted just 80 seconds but reopened scars in a community traumatized by mass shootings in nearby Denver suburbs - at Columbine High School in 1999 and an Aurora movie complex in 2012.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Post-Columbine

Security procedures hailed by Gov.

Colorado's governor on Sunday credited security procedures adopted after the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School for helping to put a quick end to Friday's shooting attack.

Gov. John Hickenlooper said that there are "strategies and protocols in place, where we had a deputy sheriff in the building who immediately ran towards the trouble."

Arapahoe High officials also immediately instituted a lockdown, with teachers and students hiding in closets and locking classroom doors. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gaza receives fuel as record storm shuts down region

Palestinians help people with their stranded vehicle in the West Bank city of Nablus — also hit by the storm — on Sunday. NASSER ISHTAYEH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Gaza Strip received its first shipment of industrial fuel in 45 days on Sunday, bringing much-needed relief after the region experienced its first snowfall in some 20 years.

The storm, which began late Wednesday and saw temperatures dip below freezing, also crippled the city of Jerusalem, leaving thousands without power in Israel and the neighbouring West Bank.

A lack of fuel has hampered rescue efforts in Gaza, where most of the damage from the storm was caused by flooding, forcing an estimated 40,000 residents to flee their homes.

The storm let up Sunday, but authorities in the region still struggled to clear roads and repair downed power lines.

Gaza has suffered from chronic fuel shortages since the Hamas militant group seized power in 2007, prompting Israel and Egypt to impose a blockade on the territory.

While the rival Palestinian government in the West Bank can send fuel to Gaza through Israel, Gaza's Hamas rulers have refused to accept the shipments, saying they cannot afford a new tax.

Palestinian border official Raed Fattouh said Sunday's Israeli fuel shipment was paid for by Qatar, an oil rich Gulf country that has aided Hamas in the past. Officials said Gazans would now have roughly 12 hours of electricity a day, up from the recent level of six hours.

Despite the blockade, Israel over the weekend also sent diesel fuel for heating and four water pumps as a humanitarian gesture.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christian militias in Central African Republic seek to overthrow president

Anti-balaka Christian militiamen walk through a forest clearing outside Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic on Sunday. The leader of the militia says his fighters won't put down their rebellion until President Michel Djotodia is gone from power, increasing a prolonged sectarian conflict in the country. More than 600 people have been killed since anti-balaka launched a strike over Bangui last week before being pushed back. JEROME DELAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ticketing scheme could save police cash

A demonstrator smokes a joint on Parliament Hill on April 20, 2010. Police would have the option of ticketing people for some minor offences under a new plan. PAWEL DWULIT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Proposal. Officers could ticket people for offences such as trespassing, nudity

Police would have the option of ticketing people for a range of minor offences — instead of laying criminal charges — under a plan that could yield significant savings for the cash-strapped justice system.

Timothy Smith, a spokesman for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, says the idea has emerged from discussions fostered by the federal government on curbing rising policing costs.

Under the proposal, officers would have the option of ticketing people for offences such as causing a disturbance, public nudity, falsifying an employment record, soliciting prostitution, vagrancy or trespassing.

It builds on a resolution the Chiefs of Police passed last August that would give forces the discretion to issue a ticket under the Contraventions Act for possession of a small amount of cannabis.

Last January, the federal Public Safety minister hosted a summit on the economics of policing that included officers and chiefs from across the country, government officials and academics. Officials say the cost of policing is steadily rising — hitting more than $12 billion in 2010 — even though the crime rate is falling.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WikiLeaks documents. 13 federal departments had contracts with U.S. firm

At least 13 Canadian government agencies have had subscriptions with U.S. private intelligence firm Strategic Forecasting, Inc. or Stratfor, sometimes dubbed a shadow CIA, newly released WikiLeaks emails indicate.

Stratfor came under fire recently after a leaked company document prepared for an oil company outlined ways to counter activist groups, such as Greenpeace, who oppose Canada's oilsands development.

The same cache of leaked emails indicates Canadian federal agencies have purchased at least half a million dollars in Stratfor services.

Emails from January 2009 and February 2011 show invoices of $13,125 and $13,725 for one-year Stratfor subscriptions for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which were not publicly disclosed by the department.

Under proactive disclosure policy, Canadian government contracts worth more than $10,000 must be posted on the web.

Foreign Affairs spokesperson Jean-Bruno Villeneuve says there was a clerical error in not reporting the contracts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The home page of the Stratfor website is seen on a computer monitor in January 2012. CASSANDRA VINOGRAD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Venezuela

Bomb threat grounds Air France flight

A Paris-bound flight was rescheduled for Sunday after Venezuela grounded an Air France plane that French intelligence authorities said terrorists might have been planning to blow up. Venezuela's intelligence agency declined to comment on the threat, saying it isn't authorized to discuss the case.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Florida

Teen charged with kidnapping

A 17-year-old faces kidnapping and carjacking charges after authorities say he stole a car with a baby inside. Daytona Beach police said their detectives spotted two stolen vehicles driving together on Friday. One had recently been stolen from a car dealership. The car stopped at a gas station where three men jumped out and took off. The baby was not injured.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dani Reiss, president and CEO of Canada Goose Inc., sits for a portrait in his Toronto office. AARON VINCENT ELKAIM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada Goose spreads its wings, migrates overseas

Status symbol.
Toronto-based parka company is flying high, and aims to soar to new heights worldwide

The head of Canada Goose is setting his sights on India and other parts of Asia as he looks beyond cold weather for future growth in the jacket business.

Dani Reiss concedes that stocking shelves in warm climates might seem usual, but he says it makes sense for the company's high-end outerwear, which has become a fashion statement as well as a way to stay warm.

"Cold is relative. Tokyo is our best market in Asia and it never goes below zero," the chief executive said in an interview at the company's headquarters in midtown Toronto.

"Just like someone in Toronto buys a Range Rover, someone in Tokyo buys a Canada Goose jacket."

Canada Goose is at a turning point.

Take a glimpse of any city street this time of year and you'll likely see Canadians wrapped in the jackets emblazoned with the company's trademark badge on the sleeve and a fur-trimmed hood. Reiss wants to boost the company's reputation beyond Canada where it sometimes seems like the jackets couldn't get any more popular. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Costly coats

$1,200

Each jacket costs between $500 and $1,200, depending on the style, and while that qualifies as a prestige product, its popularity transcends other pricey brands.

UN prediction

Global e-waste to rise 30% by 2017

The mountain of refrigerators, cellphones, TV sets and other electrical waste disposed of annually worldwide is forecast to grow by a third by 2017, according to a UN study released Sunday.

E-waste — defined as anything with a battery or a cord — can pose a big problem because it often contains substances that are harmful to humans and the environment if not properly treated. On the other hand, some of it can be profitably recycled.

A UN think-tank dedicated to the issue estimates that the amount of e-waste will rise from almost 53.9 million tons in 2012 to 72.09 million tons in 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

E-waste at a recycling park in Germany. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Mr. Roboto, to do the jobs that humans currently do?

Robots built in labs are heading to Florida this week for a government-sponsored competition on doing humanlike tasks. The CMU Highly Intelligent Mobile Platform robot, a.k.a. CHIMP, practises by switching the hold of a fire hose from one grasping unit to another. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Naughty or nice? Do your research before donating

Holiday season leave you feeling like decking one of the halls? Like ringing Santa's bell?

If you're on the verge of a mall-induced rampage, maybe it's time to try giving instead of buying.

Studies show charitable giving boosts happiness and reduces stress, says Lara Aknin, an assistant professor of psychology at Simon Fraser University.

"Giving makes you happy," says Aknin, whose many studies of the link between philanthropy and well-being included measuring cortisol in the bloodstream. That study found that when people gave more, the stress hormone dissipated more quickly in their blood. "When people are spending money in a way that they're giving to others by way of charity, we see similar emotional boosts. It's more rewarding than spending money on yourself," Aknin says.

Another study found the reward is even greater when giving is a social activity.

In short, good deeds put us in a good mood, but when it comes to playing Santa for social good, make sure you know who's been naughty and who's been nice. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Charities angling for donations, such as the Salvation Army, are ubiquitous right now. Before dropping cash in a kettle, do your homework. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Top 100

MoneySense Magazine issues an annual list of the top 100 charities, based on its analysis of fundraising and spending activities.

- This year, the magazine gave top grades to the Nature Conservancy Canada, the Canadian Red Cross, the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank, the Royal Ontario Museum Foundation and the United Way, among others. the Calgary Foundation, the Edmonton Community Foundation and the Vancouver Foundation also made the grade for their program spending, fundraising costs, governance, transparency and cash reserves.
- The Canadian Red Cross, which funds emergency relief at home and abroad, is a perennial favourite, spending 80 per cent of its funds on charitable programs and just four per cent on management and administration.

ARE WE ENGAGED YET, OTTAWA?

URBAN COMPASS

Steve Collins
ottawa@metronews.ca

City council last week made a New Year's resolution for 2014, vowing to do a better job of communicating with and consulting the public.

That's how I read their intention, anyway. What they actually did was vote to approve something called the Public Engagement Strategy. It will replace the old 2003 Public Participation Policy, which apparently wasn't cutting the consultative mustard.

"Many recent engagement activities have been successful," the city report reads, "while others have been less so."

You probably won't have to rack your brain too hard for your favourite example of "less so."

The matter of detouring buses off the Transitway and onto Scott Street during LRT construction, for example. The plan to divert as many as 300 buses an hour onto a street not renowned for its smoothly moving traffic is staggeringly unpopular with many area residents.

Some showed up to Monday's transit commission meeting, where the detour was on the agenda, but the city solicitor advised the commissioners they had no jurisdiction to tinker with the scheme. And since the commission was powerless to do anything, members of the public were advised not to comment.

Everything had, after all, been decided nearly a year ago, when council voted on the entire Confederation Line plan, the detour buried somewhere in the fine print.

I'm reminded at such times of a bit in Douglas Adam's The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, in which plans for the unannounced demolition of protagonist Arthur Dent's home have been clearly posted for inspection by any interested party — "in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying 'Beware the Leopard.'"

So it's encouraging that the city acknowledges it could do a better job of letting the public in on decision-making.

Consulting, though, is a complex matter. You can't just start letting people know what you propose to do, listening to their concerns and actually taking those into account. You need a "framework" and "tools," in the relentless consultant-speak of the Public Engagement Strategy.

A taste: "The Public Engagement Cycle is a key component of the Public Engagement Strategy. The Cycle is a seven-step process that staff will follow when planning and implementing public engagement. Use of this cycle will promote consistency in how public engagement is undertaken at the City of Ottawa and also promote continuous improvement through the sharing of learning."

One of the strategy's guiding principles is to use "plain language." How do you like it so far?

Fortunately, the city also consulted members of the public about how they'd like to be consulted, and their collective wish list, as summarized by staff, boiled down to three basic things:

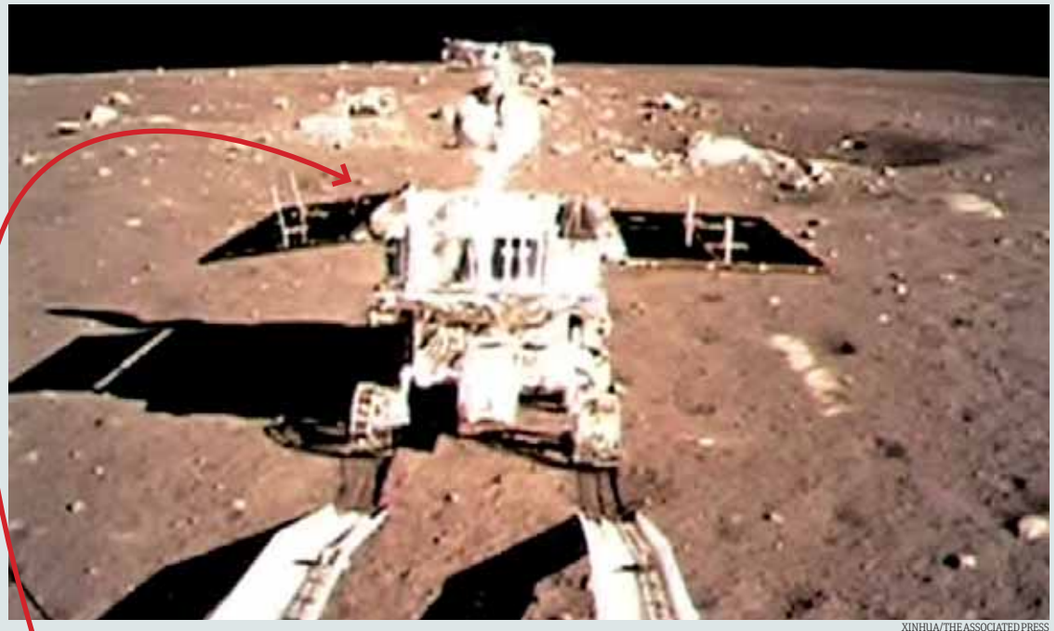
a) Having sufficient time and notice to become educated about a subject matter in order to participate in a meaningful way and to provide informed input;

b) Having the ability to participate early enough in the process, before a decision or concept is too far developed to be modified;

c) Having their input considered with the same "weight" as that accorded to other sectors (i.e., developers or other business interests). Not much to ask, is it?

ZOOM

China makes its first moon landing



XINHUA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rover, lander snap pics of each other

In this image taken by the on-board camera of the lunar probe Chang'e-3 and made off the screen of the Beijing Aerospace Control Center in Beijing, China's first moon rover Jade Rabbit touches the lunar surface Sunday.

State broadcaster China Central Television showed images taken from the lander's camera of the rover and its shadow moving down a sloping ladder and touching the surface, setting off applause in the Beijing control centre.

China has completed the world's first soft landing of a space probe on the moon in nearly four decades.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The mission

- The six-wheeled rover will survey the moon's geological structure and surface and look for natural resources for three months, while the lander will carry out scientific explorations at the landing site for one year.
- The mission marks the next stage in an ambitious space program that aims to eventually put a Chinese astronaut on the moon. China's space program is an enormous source of pride for the country, the third to carry out a lunar soft landing — which does not damage the craft and the equipment it carries.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
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CONTRIBUTED

"We are looking for highly intelligent individuals. To find them, we have devised a test."

Thus began a simple message, written in white text against a black background, signed "3301" and uploaded to a 4chan message board in 2012, kicking off a cryptic Internet mystery known as Cicada 3301.

Consisting of images and encoded messages designed to challenge the most cryptically minded, the mystery that began with that simple message is a sprawling labyrinth that winds through math, poetry, ancient runes and steampunk, eventually leading those taking up the challenge to real locations across the world, where posters and QR codes are the cache.

Eventually, the ace brains who have cracked the code and overcome obstacles like message boards and forums purposefully seeded with misinformation find themselves in what's known as The Onion Router — a "dark Internet" of sites that are not indexed by search engines. The puzzles and messages become private and those who got close to the prize are left to wonder what they were participating in.

So what is it all about? Speculation has it that the NSA, CIA or some other government agency is using the teasers to recruit new operatives.

Or perhaps it's a private endeavour looking for cryptology candidates to staff their operations.

Whoever is behind it, only a very select few have been able to learn. And they've been remarkably tight-lipped once the puzzles go private.

The first Cicada puzzle emerged on Jan. 4, 2012. A second was released to the web on the same date in 2013.

Will there be a third iteration? That's just as big a mystery.

To learn more about Cicada 3301, check uncovering-cicada.wikia.com.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: ottawaletters@metronews.ca

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Can you spot the real 12 Days of Christmas verse among these mondegreens? ISTOCK

And a paltry tin-affair tree!

Say what? Do you really know what you're singing when it comes to Christmas carol lyrics?

Milk and spiders? Nine lazy Hansons? Sleep in heavenly peas?

It's that time of year: holiday music time. And with holiday music comes all the strange and twisted things we sometimes think we're hearing.

Mondegreens, the moniker for misheard words in song, aren't restricted to holiday standards, of course, but the old-timey language of some seems to serve as a botched-lyric magnet.

Lest you think funny turns on song lyrics are the stuff of childhoods, Missy O'Reilly knows otherwise. She's an actress, comedian and co-owner of Planet Rose, a karaoke haven on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

"I'm the biggest Christmas nerd, so I'm always encouraging people to sing Christmas music," she said. "Some people are really surprised when they see what the real words are."

Look no further than Snopes.com for handy examples submitted by readers of the website that collects and debunks urban legends, folklore, myths, rumours and misinformation. Noting that mondegreens aren't parody, but words we actually think we're listening to, Snopes keeps a list of holiday gems.

For The Twelve Days of Christmas, there's "ten lawyers leaving" and "nine lazy Hansons." Later we've got "six geezers laying," along with "a paltry tin-affair tree." Those are in lieu of lords a-leaping, ladies dancing, geese a-laying and the obligatory partridge in a pear tree, FYI.

If ever you've made it to the fourth verse of Winter Wonderland, you'll be relieved to know it doesn't include "Later on milk and spiders, as we dream by the fire," but rather: "Later on we'll conspire ..." And that snowman you may or may not build in the meadow? You should pretend he's "Parson Brown," not "sparse and brown," or "parched and brown." Just sayin'.

There are most definitely no "peas" in Silent Night, but "heavenly peace." In Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town, the big guy in red does this: "making a list, checkin' it twice." Not this: "making a list, of chicken and rice."

Sometimes, O'Reilly said, an entire holiday song is one big what?! She was thinking of the haunting yet beautiful — to the ears of some critics — Fairytale of New York, co-written by Shane MacGowen of the Celtic punk group The Pogues.

An Irish immigrant recalling a Christmas Eve stay in a New York City drunk tank tells of an inebriated older cellmate whose rendition of a traditional ballad spins the thickly brogued narrator (MacGowen) into a raunchy imagining of a debauched life with the old ditty's female character.

"It's a beautiful, beautiful song but people are always confused by what the words are," O'Reilly said. "It's really hard to decipher the words."

Not to get all wonky, but the song isn't really a mondegreen. Grant Barrett, co-host of the public radio show on language A Way with Words defines mondegreens this way, explaining they can happen for poetry and other spoken language as well:

"You're mishearing where one word ends and another word begins. This is called misdivision. And sometimes you're mishearing a word itself. It sounds like another word to you, and so you try to match that sound up with a word that you already know that kind of fits into the plot, if there is one. And that's called reanalysis," he said.

Don't mind him. He's a lexicographer, and he claims he has no mondegreens of his own.

"I misremember," said Barrett, in San Diego. "That's different. I always joke that I know the first 10 per cent of thousands of songs and that's it."

Babes are little mondegreen machines. Paula Werne, who works at a holiday theme park in Santa Claus, Ind., had one in her son, John, who is now 22.

As a tot of three he took to singing Jolly Old Saint Nicholas to his stuffed animals out of a Christmas songbook, mom said. Only he turned "Christmas Eve is coming soon; now you dear old man," into "dirty old man."

Them's fightin' words in Werne's town, but she and her husband let it go. "It was too cute and he was so happy that he knew all the words," Werne said. "By the next year, he'd figured it out. I still sing it that way, though."

Russell Rabut doesn't have any mondegreens, but he is one.

The 22-year-old senior at San Diego State University, majoring in — what else, English — plays rhythm guitar in a band called The Mondegreens. He took the name to his band mates, all high school friends from Chico, Calif., after a fellow student in a creative writing class mentioned it.

"I had never heard of it before. It's a very beautiful word and it's cool how it came to exist," he said. "It just seems like such an eloquent irony, that existing art can spin something poetic by accident."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's in a word?

What's a mondegreen? According to Grant Barrett, co-host of the public radio show A Way With Words, the word mondegreen can be traced to Sylvia Wright and a column she wrote in Harper's Magazine in 1954 titled The Death of Lady Mondegreen. Wright discovered that for years she had botched the last line of the first stanza of the Scottish folk ballad The Bonnie Earl o'Moray.

How it goes, with spellings based on updates of antiquated English: "They have slain the Earl of Moray, and laid him on the green."

What she heard: "They have slain the Earl of Moray, and Lady Mondegreen."

Steven Van Zandt is still a tough guy on Lilyhammer

Steven Van Zandt might be the hardest working person in show business today. HANDOUT

Interview. The man who never wanted to be the Sopranos' boss dishes on the Boss and the changing nature of television

ALEXANDRA CAVALLO
Metro World News

Depending on where their interests lie, most people probably know Steven Van Zandt as Tony Soprano's main man Silvio or Bruce Springsteen's main man and longtime guitarist for the Boss's E Street Band.

These days, however, Van Zandt has a whole new gig, playing — you guessed it — a New York mafioso hiding out in Norway on Netflix's Lilyhammer. Van Zandt produces, writes and stars in the show, which was Netflix's first original series, paving the way for the likes of House of Cards and Orange is the New Black.

We got Van Zandt, who just might be the busiest man in show biz, on the line to talk TV, music and mobsters

How do you feel that new platforms like Netflix are changing the game for television?
Well, you have this idea of a global network. You picture five years down the road, they're going to have a lot of territories, which means it's going to be one stop shopping for content creators, which is a wonderful new concept. And I believe they're the first of what I believe is going to be a whole new series of global, digitally distributed networks. You know, I believe there will be a Google TV, and an Apple TV. Who knows who? In the end, what's going to distinguish one network from another is the original content. So I think we'll see that in the next five years or so, they're just a little bit ahead of the game. And I think putting all the episodes up at once is a little bit ahead of everybody else, and is very much how people watch things now.

So how did you end up playing a mobster again? Is it a writing what you know sort of thing?
No, no. I had no intention of doing that. But it happens to be something I know a lot about, so it saved me a whole lot of research. But, no, this brilliant husband-and-wife found me — I was producing a Norwegian band that's on my label in Bergen, Norway — and they said 'listen, we have an idea' and in one sentence it was 'Norwegian, gangster, Lilyhammer' and I just thought a bunch of things simultaneously. One of which was, I can't possibly do this, I just played a gangster for 10 years. And soon after that I thought, this is a terrific idea.

Was it difficult, at first, playing Frank differently than you played Silvio?
No, I really do an extensive biography of the guy and what his whole thing and history and likes and dislikes are. And it was really obvious to me that Silvio was the only guy on Sopranos who didn't want to be the boss. But this guy really is a boss, and much more outgoing and much less having to be concerned over his job.

Do you find it hard convincing people you're a nice guy, always playing mobsters?
(Laughs) No,because I'm not. I'm not a particularly nice guy actually!

I understand you had to take time off from touring with Springsteen to film this new season, and Tom Morello (of Audioslave/Rage Against the Machine) filled in for you. Was it hard to give that up?
No, no, not really. It was unfortunate, but I feel lucky that my life doesn't overlap more than it does, actually. Just that last tour alone, which was a two year tour, I did a second season of Lilyhammer and I directed a Broadway show for the Rascals, in addition to my radio show and everything else — and that was while I was on tour.

I feel like Springsteen has gotten more prolific than ever, in his old age. Do you think he has a ton more albums left in him?
I don't see him slowing down at all, you're right. I agree with you. You know, maybe not quite as crazy prolific as …. writing 80 songs for each record, you know, literally. But he certainly always has an album in his pocket; he usually has two.

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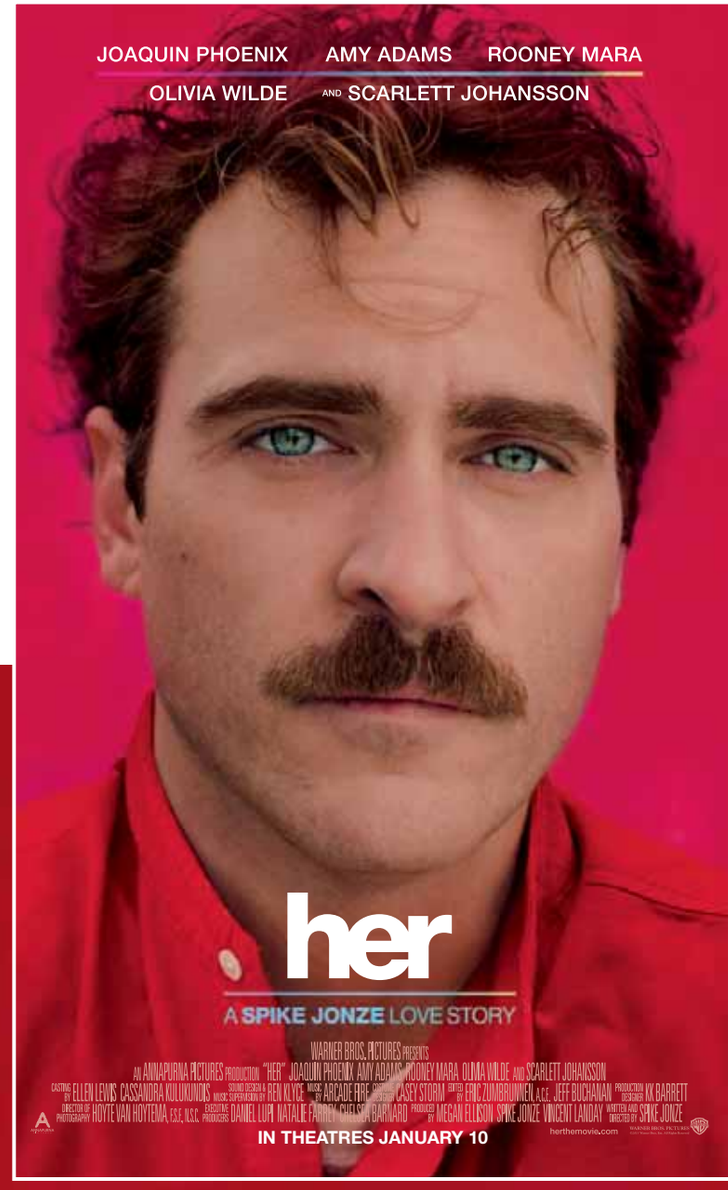

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Contest closes December 22, 2013 at 11.59PM (EST).
To enter and for complete contest rules visit www.clubmetro.com

'Tis the season for anti-holiday films

There aren't many actual festive movies out this holiday season; Christmas Day instead brings a movie about old guys boxing and one where greedy mega-capitalists do drugs and bang hookers for three hours. For the non-believers or even just Grinches among us, there's a fair amount of films that call into question the season.

MATT PRIGGE
Metro World News in New York

Brazil (1985)

There's a fairly immense cottage industry of films just incidentally set during the holidays. One would be Terry Gilliam's dystopian classic, where the awakening of one shy bureaucrat (Jonathan Pryce) is contrasted with the materialistic cheer of gift-giving in a futuristic England where the rich have gotten used to frequent terrorist bombings.

Die Hard (1988) Gremlins (1985)

There's also a cottage industry of action/horror/thrillers with immense Christmas trees in the background and dead people in Santa Claus costumes. Die Hard features Bruce Willis battling Alan Rickman and posse on Christmas Eve, while Gremlins unleashes homicidal pranksters around the holidays.

The Ref (1994)

Annual holiday staples rarely come better than this nasty little number, in which a profane crook (Denis Leary) kidnaps a couple (Judy Davis and Kevin Spacey) who just happen to be on the verge of a nasty divorce. Leary tries to intervene with his Bill Hicks-knockoff shtick, but eventually even he can't compete with his captors' near-Ingmar Bergman-esque pain, only with far more cussing.

Eyes Wide Shut (1999)

Stanley Kubrick had Jack Nicholson unraveling over a long winter break in The Shining. Why not try it with Tom Cruise? After getting high with his wife (Nicole Kidman) results in her confessing that she's lusted for others, Cruise heads out into the night for a series of adventures, leading to a tony masked orgy outside of NYC limits.

A Christmas Tale (2008)

French filmmaker Arnaud Desplechin's (Kings and Queen) contribution to the holidays is an epic of dysfunction, only with a family who've gotten used to not getting along and have reached some kind of brittle compromise. Fists fly, everyone drinks too much and there's even some sex, but that's how this family rolls.

White Reindeer (2013)

Christmas fanatic Anna Margaret Hollyman comes home to find her husband's head bludgeoned by robbers. She starts questioning the suburban persona she's crafted over the years, especially once she befriends the stripper her husband used to frequent. Happy holidays!

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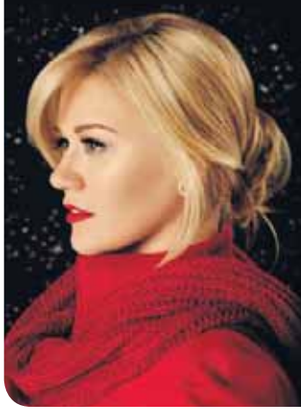

The holiday album features brand new instant-classics such as the first single, "Underneath The Tree" and title track, "Wrapped In Red" as well as Christmas favourites, "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," "Blue Christmas," "Run Run Rudolph," "Please Come Home For Christmas" and many more!

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Lindsay Lohan. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Lindsay Lohan getting back to her old ways

Allegedly ordering friends to beat up Barron Hilton appears to be just a small part of Lindsay Lohan's wild week in Miami for Art Basel, as the troubled post-rehab starlet reportedly "threw tantrums all week," according to Radar Online.

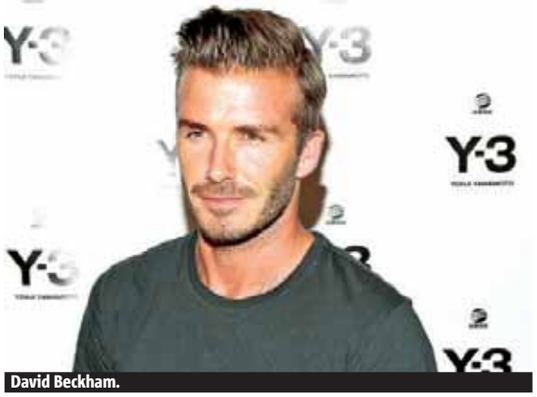
"Lindsay was a mess at every event at Art Basel," a source says.

So what had Lohan so in a state? Run-ins with the Miami-based ex-girlfriend of Morgan O'Connor, the 18-year-old model Lohan has been dating.

"Lindsay had a tantrum when she would see Morgan's ex-girlfriend at events," a source explains. "She would throw her arms in the air, stomp her feet and fling her hair around. She was acting like she was 10 years old."

Those displays might have been the last straw for O'Connor, who has reportedly soured on the Mean Girls star.

"Morgan wants nothing to do with her at all," the source says. "He is telling people that he is nervous and freaking out that his career is going to be affected by all her crazy evilness. She's obsessed with him."



David Beckham.

Beckham's kids want to get tattoos

David Beckham is learning the hard way that dissuading your kids from getting tattoos is particularly difficult when you yourself have more than 30 pieces on your body.

"They've already said they're having tattoos done," Beckham told Jonathan Ross during an interview.

"And I said, 'Well, be different. Don't have any tattoos.' They said, 'No, we're going to have one. We're going to have Mum and Dad.' So I can't really say no to that."

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Britney Spears wants to ruin yet another life

STARGAZING
Malene Arpe
scene@metronews.ca

Britney Spears says she really wants to have a baby girl, a "mini-me," so she won't feel as alone in the world anymore. She did, however, also say that it's not just that she's selfish or anything and that having a baby is also "a good excuse to buy Skittles."

Scandal's Season 3 has been shortened due to Kerry Washington's pregnancy. And they couldn't just give us four episodes of Cyrus and Mellie scheming while pretending Olivia got caught by B-613? #dearthofgoodideas #bitterbitterfan.

At this year's Jingle Ball Miley Cyrus twerked with Santa Claus and Selena Gomez cursed and angrily walked off stage. Sadly, Justin Bieber and his No-pants Elf Dancers couldn't make it.

After all the bad reviews of her performance in The Sound of Music Live!, Carrie Underwood tweeted, "Plain and simple: Mean people need Jesus...." Said Jesus, "Well sure, but you must remember, Carrie, that critique does not equal meanness. Also, that rust-coloured dress sure didn't do you any favours."

MTV names Miley Cyrus Artist of the Year. We're so very, very sorry, Franz von Schneiderlick. You will just have to continue making your impressionist straw tableaux in obscurity.

Jack White.

Jack White finalizes divorce

Jack White's divorce from Karen Elson has officially been finalized more than two years after the couple first separated, according to Rolling Stone.

Elson, who married White in 2005, was granted primary custody of their two children, daughter Scarlett and son Henry.

Over the summer, she had obtained a temporary restraining order against White based on claims that he had been harassing her about their divorce settlement.

In that filing, Elson had claimed that she "fears for her and the children's safety as a result of this harassment."

Simon Cowell.

Simon Cowell has big plans for his kid

Simon Cowell is a pretty good judge of talent, so he's already prepared should the son he's expecting with Lauren Silverman decide he wants to be a singer.

"As long as he signs a lifelong recording contract with me, I'd be happy with that," the X Factor boss tells E! News about the impending birth.

Cowell also confirms that he and Silverman have picked out a name for the boy, but that's as far he'll go for now.

"I'm not going to say what it is yet, but I'm happy," Cowell says.

Twitter

@ActuallyNPH
Enjoying my weekend of various holiday parties. Bring on the nog! #hiccup

@AlbertBrooks
Congrats to China for landing on the moon. Can't wait for my first iPhone that says: "designed in California, made on the moon."

@SarahKSilverman
I'll now be live tweeting my post-nap haze

Travel Tidbit

Ain't it grand?

IT'S ALL RELATIVE
Kathy Buckworth
Kathybuckworth.com

Entertaining the kids in the car, plane or train on the way to grandma's house is a challenge. But parents are often left scrambling to find something for the kids to do once there. You don't want to drag along the whole toy room, but find some space to pack items to keep the kids busy.

Building blocks, like Lego, are terrific as the kids can continually create new things. Buy the bucket of blocks versus the kits. The kits tend to have an "all finished" sense once completed, whereas the "free building" can go on forever.

Stop by the dollar store and pick up basic arts and crafts supplies. Non-permanent markers and construction paper are great for making decorations.

A deck of cards and a popular board game can fill hours of time.

Download movies or TV shows that the kids love on your own laptop or tablet, if you're unsure what TV channels or internet access the grandparents have. Rogers' new Kids Zone portal has many pre-selected loved shows from channels you trust. You can set up a playlist so you know exactly what they're watching. Grand times. **KATHY BUCKWORTH IS THE AUTHOR OF I AM SO THE BOSS OF YOU.**

Exclusively online

Read the latest Metro content from Lyranda Martin Evans and Fiona Stevenson, authors of the hilarious, best-selling book Reasons Mommy Drinks, at metronews.ca/voices.

Cookies, gifts and...meditation?

Q&A. The big man in red is exceptionally busy around this time of year, what with toy-making and list-checking — but he did find a few minutes to chat with us

Santa says oatmeal raisin cookies are great but he'll skip the eggnog. ISTOCK

Greetings, Santa! We're so grateful to speak with you, considering how hectic your schedule must be right now.
It's the most wonderful time of the year! And it is busy, but it is always a delight to talk to you.

How do you manage your time?
That's one of the most difficult things about the job — that it does take a lot of time and energy, focus, concentration, meditation and prayers.

Santa meditates?
Of course — everyone should have meditation. It's the moments of thinking of nothing that so many wonderful joyous things come. It's kind of a gift that I give to myself as Santa, that I'm able to take a moment and turn the lights down and light my magical candle and think.

We bet Mrs. Claus loves to see you in a relaxed state.
Even at this time of year, Mrs. Claus and the elves are extremely busy. They're keeping up with me, being sure that I have my food, my time, and keeping the list on who's naughty and nice...

Say, what kinds of cookies should we leave out for you on Christmas Eve?
I'm trying to lean toward oatmeal and raisin — it's a little healthier for me. I'm trying to watch my weight. Otherwise, how could I ever get down all those chimneys? And I would suggest carrots for the reindeer, although they are leaning heavily toward candy corn. [And] skim milk all the way! (Laughs)

Should we leave you some eggnog too?
I'll be driving so I'll have to pass.

You've likely got lots of people to visit. How many letters do you think you'll receive this year?
Millions. I'm already getting letters from children who tell me what they want. And some of the most wonderful letters include the whole family — my brother wants this, my mom, my dad [want this]. Even if you're on the naughty list, you have a little bit of time left.

So how can someone on the naughty list end up on the nice list?
By being nice. If you're a child, by being respectful and obedient. If you're an adult, by helping someone, by being nice. It's very important.

We want to know how you spend your time when you're not working. For example, how do you spend your summers?
I enjoy fishing. We have some wonderful fishing up in the North Pole toward southern Alaska.

And what do you do the day after Christmas?
I'll go back to the North Pole, collect the elves and the reindeer and we'll settle down for a nice, long winter's nap. [Then we start working again] as soon as I wake up. When you love what you do, you never have to worry about working because it's a joy. We start to think about the toys for next year.
METRO

The rubber-band gang

Cooper Volkman wears loom band bracelets. LORI L. VOLKMAN/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cooper Volkman is eight years old, full of energy and tends to be perpetually in motion.

Lately, though, it's been different. In the evenings, when his mom, Lori, makes dinner, Cooper is absorbed by a new hobby: making bracelets and other objects out of tiny, colourful rubber bands.

The current craze for kids — Rainbow Loom bands and their many knockoffs — has been surprising parents and child development experts. In a market glutted with crafts marketed to girls, loom bands are the rare gender-neutral hobby that appeals to boys, too.

Open to Everyone

Tricia Ross' son avoids playing with his sisters' toys. But he and many male classmates in Charlottesville, Va., have seized on loom bands.

"There's a sense of accomplishment" that comes with finishing a bracelet, Ross says, and it's enough to inspire her son to "sit until it's complete."

Ross and Volkman find that while many craft products are packaged in pink boxes emblazoned with pictures of smiling girls, the gender-neutral packaging of loom band products make them more boy-friendly.

Good For Development

Loom bands are popular among kids age seven to 12, a key time for developing.

"Right around age seven, you see fine motor skills taking off," says Cynthia Edwards, professor of psychology at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C. "Anything that helps them to use those hands together, left and right, helps to develop those areas of the brain and the muscles themselves. "

Kids in this age group are also developing "executive function," the ability to plan and execute tasks, Edwards says. With loom band weaving, kids must choose what to create (it's gone beyond bracelets to everything from backpack fobs to action figures), pick a colour scheme and style of weaving, gather materials and then do the weaving steps in the right order. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Would you leave your working wishes behind for a higher wage?

I want money, that's what I want. Post-secondary students are increasingly trading in dreams for paychecks

JULIA WEST
Metro World News

In this day and age, laying back and letting a great job come to you is much less of an option. ISTOCK

Satisfaction in the pocketbook is trumping personal fulfillment for incoming college freshmen, according to a new study.

ACT, the nonprofit testing company that helps students prepare for college, released a report last month regarding how today's students choose a major. It found that close to a third of incoming freshmen are enrolling not in a field that interests them, but rather one that will help them land steady, well-paying jobs after graduation.

It sounds like a practical — though less than exciting — college plan, but that doesn't mean it's a wise move.

This isn't the first time this trend has surfaced. "It's interesting that this phenomenon is happening again," says organizational psychologist Dr. Billie Blair. "It was a prevalent practice 20 to 30 years ago when so many were encouraged to go into medicine because of the excellent pay."

A steady paycheck is a wonderful thing, especially right out of college. It's important for freshmen to remember, too, that their sanity and happiness also come into play when choosing a major.

"No doubt about it, in today's economic environment students need to be practical in selecting majors," states Carol A. Sitterly, dean for academic success at American International College.

"But they also need to select majors and career fields that they can feel passionate about over the next 40 years of their working life."

Keeping that passion alive and active isn't always easy when graduates are struggling to find work. Like so many things in life, being able to strike the right balance can make all the difference.

"The critical question is whether [students] can find a space in that world that they are good at and that they can get excited about even as they chase a paycheck," says Rita McGrath, associate professor at Columbia Business School.

McGrath reminds us that no matter how much time a student puts into the decision-making process, things can change while at school. "Very few students find that their careers unfold as they predicted, so the choice of major is probably a much smaller determinant of ultimate outcomes than we might assume," she says.

Making ends meet

"No doubt about it, in today's economic environment students need to be practical in selecting majors."

Carol A. Sitterly
Dean for academic success at American International College

Switching majors

The dreams versus paychecks debate isn't just for incoming students, it also affects current students who are thinking about changing majors.

- The best way to figure it out is with the resources that are already available. "Students thinking about changing majors should take an interest inventory and talk with an academic or career adviser about what jobs match their interests," says Sitterly.

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Should we be bringing teaching to the tablet?

School on a screen.
One in three kids using iPads in class admit to playing games: Canadian study

Will iPads be the next school desk staple? ISTOCK

A third of Quebec students surveyed about using iPads in class admitted to playing games during school hours and an astounding 99 per cent said they found the gadgets distracting, suggests a new study based on the experiences of more than 6,000 tablet-toting kids.

But even though just a few students said they felt a tablet helped them learn better, the report's co-authors still concluded that schools should invest in the technology, although cautiously.

Researchers surveyed 6,057 students, who were enrolled in Grades 6 through 10, and 302 teachers about their experiences so far in using tablets daily in the classroom.

The report concludes that outfitting large numbers of students with costly tablets is a worthwhile endeavour, provided that teachers are well prepared and trained for the radical shift in delivering their lesson plans.

"It would appear that incorporating the iPad into education constitutes a necessary risk for schools, and that this technological tool has breathtaking cognitive potential," states the report.

But co-author Thierry Karsenti noted that so far, teachers have generally not been well prepared to teach with tablets.

The report notes that 70 per cent of the teachers surveyed said they had "never or very rarely" used an iPad before they were introduced into their classrooms, versus 53.6 per cent of their students.

"Some of the teachers were getting the iPad on the first day of school with their students, can you imagine? All the students were on Facebook, Twitter and the teachers were like, 'Oh my God, this is not working,' and blaming the technology because he or she was not ready," said Karsenti, the Canada research chair for information and communication technologies in education.

"You have teachers who are fully unaware of what's going on in the classroom, they're sitting reading their notes and the students are doing whatever they want."

iPositives

- When teachers were asked about the benefits of using iPads in class, about half said it opened up better access to information, 40 per cent cited the easy portability of the devices, and about a third said it allowed for greater collaboration.

The report notes that a "surprising" number of students — more than one in three — admitted to playing games in class, sometimes with their teachers' permission after an assignment or task was completed.

Researchers were also surprised that, in some ways, the tablet technology wasn't been used to its full potential. Students said they did relatively little reading on their tablets and were still using paper textbooks, while many assignments were still be submitted on paper rather than electronically. About 85 per cent of the students said they never or rarely used the iPad to prepare written work.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Round the world wisdom

The straightest path may not be the fastest

The severe market crash in October 2008 changed my life. I started running to regain my health, both emotional and physical. Shortly after I took my first steps, I ran the Gobi March in China in June '09, followed by the Atacama Crossing in Chile in '10 and the Sahara Race in Egypt in '11. In this post, I share a lesson about life, learned from the desert.

LESSONS FROM THE DESERT
Stéfan Danis
life@metronews.ca

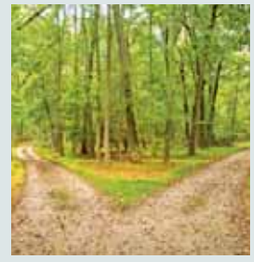
The simplest path between two points is a straight line. While mathematically true, in life this is rarely the case. Up and downs, twists and turns, that's the norm we all know. In desert running, where you'd think the shortest path would be the one most advantageous, often times it isn't. In running, as in life, while one path may seem harder, longer or more difficult, it may be the one that pays the most rewards.

When facing the Sahara Desert I was advised to carefully pick my running lines and avoid simply darting ahead. The desert course we ran had signal flags roughly every 100m, so that racers knew the specific direction to be followed. Unlike the rocky desert terrain of the Gobi or the Atacama deserts where I had excelled, the Sahara's sand was soft and its dunes windswept daily.

Now, instead of running the shortest distance, I would now be scanning to calculate my path of least resistance: Which side of the sand dune was wind packed? Which side was sun-baked with firm, vein-like grooves? Where might there be rock sediments I could run on with a hardened surface? I ran a longer route and was a degree off course for most of the race, but it paved a swift arrival to the finish line.

Have you looked at all the alternative paths to overcome your challenges?

STÉFAN DANIS IS THE CEO OF NEXCAREER AND MANDRAKE, AND THE AUTHOR OF GOBI RUNNER



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Cherry-White Chocolate Drop Cookies: Beat the baking guilt

This recipe makes two dozen cookies. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At this time of year, we are constantly reminded that happy families are supposed to have special bonding moments while baking luscious holiday treats. If we really loved our children, we'd be delighted by the mess they make while dumping flour on the floor and spilling raw eggs down the side of the stove.

And so begins the guilt. Not only are we supposed to be baking, we're also supposed to be enjoying it.

To attempt to assuage the guilt, try these one-bowl cookies.

Ingredients

- 2 sticks (1 cup) butter, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp almond extract
- 1/4 cup milk
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup dried cherries
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup white chocolate chips

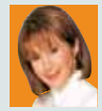
1. Heat the oven to 375 F. Line 2 baking sheets with kitchen parchment.

2. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the butter and both sugars until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the egg, almond extract and milk, then mix well. Add the flour and baking soda, then mix just until the dry ingredients are well mixed in. Mix in the cherries, cranberries and chocolate chips.

3. Drop the dough in 2-tablespoon mounds on the prepared baking sheets, leaving 2 inches between them. Bake, in batches if necessary, for 12 to 14 minutes, or until just lightly browned at the edges and still slightly soft at the centre. Leave on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then use a spatula to transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Healthy eating

Choose it and lose it



ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit rosereisman.com or follow her on twitter @rosereisman

Kids love McDonalds but parents don't love the fat and calories. Here is a way to make a wise choice when ordering for the little ones.

4 chicken nuggets/ small fries / small Oreo small McFlurry

750 calories / 34 g fat

Kids love this Happy Meal but it's half their daily calories and fat.

Equivalent

Four nuggets with small fries and a small Oreo McFlurry are equivalent in fat to 28 Heinz Mini Mozzarella Pizza Bagel Bites.

Grilled chicken snack wrap/ mini fries / chocolate milk

560 calories / 20 g fat

The grilled chicken allows for some fries and the chocolate milk saves the calories and fat of the McFlurry.

Dessert. Chocolate Orange-Lace Cookies

1. Heat oven to 350 F. Line 2 baking sheets with kitchen parchment.

2. In bowl, use electric mixer to beat butter and sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy, 3 minutes. Add egg, vanilla and orange zest, then beat until light and fluffy, about another 4 minutes. In another bowl, mix oats, baking powder and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and beat just until combined. Stir in the chocolate chips by hand.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 1/4 cup plus 3 tbsp sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp freshly grated orange zest (about 1 orange)
- 1 1/4 cups rolled oats
- 1 tsp double-acting baking powder
- 1/8 tsp table salt
- 1/2 cup bittersweet chocolate chips

3. Scoop dough 1 tablespoon at a time onto prepared baking sheets, arranging about 2 inches apart and about 12 per baking sheet. Use back of spoon to lightly press down on each mound to slightly flatten it. Bake cookies, one sheet at a time, on oven's centre rack until edges brown, 8 minutes.

4. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A very Christmas cheesecake

This recipe serves 16. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. Heat the oven to 375 F. Coat a deep 10-inch cake pan with baking spray, then line the bottom with kitchen parchment.

2. In a food processor, combine the chocolate wafer cookies and brown sugar. Pulse until finely ground. Drizzle in the butter and pulse to combine. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan and press evenly over the bottom. Bake for 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside. Lower the oven temperature to 300 F.

3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl use an electric mixer on medium-low to beat cream cheese until smooth. Take care to not beat in any extra air, but to scrape down bowl thoroughly to avoid lumps. Add granulated sugar and beat again, scraping the bowl thoroughly. Add the eggs one at a time, again incorporating gently, but thoroughly scraping the bowl.

Ingredients

- 6 oz chocolate wafer cookies (2/3 of a 9-oz package)
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 4 tbsp (1/2 stick) butter, melted
- Four 8-oz packages cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1 vanilla bean or 2 tbsp vanilla extract
- 6 oz chopped bittersweet chocolate
- 1/2 cup red currant jelly
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios

4. Scrape in the seeds from the vanilla bean or add the vanilla extract. Stir in the bittersweet chocolate. Pour the batter into the prepared pan over the crust. Tap the pan gently on the counter to eliminate any air bubbles. Place the pan into a larger roasting pan. Pour enough boiling water into the roasting pan, taking care not to get any into the cheesecake, to come halfway up the sides of the cake.

5. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, or until just barely jiggly at the centre. Turn off the oven and carefully prop the door open with a spoon. Allow to cool 2 hours. Remove pan from the oven and refrigerate until completely cold, at least 4 hours.

6. When ready to unmould the cheesecake, run a paring knife around the edge. Dip just the bottom of the pan in hot water for 1 minute to loosen the crust. Place a large plate over the top of the pan, then flip the pan over so that the cheesecake is upside down. The cake should release onto the plate. Remove the parchment from the crust and place a serving platter over it. Flip the cake a second time to end with the cheesecake right side up.

7. Microwave the red currant jelly for 1 minute and stir until smooth. Spread evenly over the top of the cheesecake. Garnish the edges with chopped pistachios. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the road

Making commuting more comfortable

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

It's estimated we spend nearly a month each year in our cars, SUVs and trucks, driving to work, running errands or driving the kids to and from events. Why not make someone's commute a little more comfortable this year with a gadget for the vehicle.

Garmin Head-up Display — $149.99

Garmin Head-up Display — $149.99

This unique GPS system takes navigation information from your smartphone and beams it onto the windshield. Get turn-by-turn directions, current speed, and estimated time of arrival without looking away from the road. The heads-up display automatically adjusts to ambient light so you can always see the information whether it's bright and sunny or dark.

Swift Hitch — $219

A camera backup system designed to help hitch a trailer or camper without the need of a second person. The magnetic mounted camera wirelessly sends video to a handheld monitor guiding you into the proper position. Dark outside? No problem. Swift Hitch has a night vision mode.

Pioneer AppRadio 3 — $499.99

The ultimate in-car entertainment system. Stream music from your phone, watch DVDs, or take advantage of dozens of popular apps on this beautiful seven-inch capacitive multi-touch screen. If you get lost you can always open one of six navigation apps to help you find your way. Knock $100 off the price tag if you can live without the DVD option.

Jabra Motion — $129.95

The safe way to take phone calls behind the wheel. This high-end Bluetooth headset adapts to the environment you are in, ensuring crystal-clear audio. The Jabra motion fits any ear, is easy to set up, and lets you take control to make calls using voice commands. It's also smart enough to go to sleep when not in use so the battery doesn't continually drain.

SpareOne Plus Emergency Phone — $79.99

The perfect gift to ensure your loved ones are safe on the road. This one-of-a-kind cellphone is powered by a single AA battery, which provides up to 10 hours of talk time. The phone comes in a waterproof bag (which you can talk through), has a panic siren and a built-in LED Torchlight that can signal for help if you become stranded on the road. This phone can keep its charge for up to 15 years if unused, even in extreme temperatures.

Speecup — $129.95

Disguised as a travel mug, this Bluetooth speaker fits into the cup holder of your vehicle. Gesture controls let you answer phone calls or skip music tracks without touching the device. Plus you have access to Apple's Siri or Samsung's S Voice on select phones.

Hipkey — $89.95

Never lose your car keys again. Attach this device to your key chain to allow tracking directly from your smartphone. You can also set an alarm to alert you if you forget your keys or if someone tries to take them. This device can be attached to electronics such as tablets, smartphones or even children.

Secure Remote Bluetooth Remote Garage Door Opener — $149

No more copying keys, memorizing codes or fiddling with traditional garage door openers. With this device you can open your garage door using your smartphone. Works with iOS, Android and BlackBerry devices.

SiriusXM Lynx — $299

If you have never had satellite radio you have no idea what you are missing. It's like having hundreds of mixed tapes at your disposable. The Lynx lets you pause, rewind and replay live radio, and will alert you when your favourite radio shows are playing. This receiver can be used in the car or at home with optional docking accessories.

Pioneer AppRadio 3 — $499.99, clockwise, from left, Swift Hitch — $219, Speecup — $129.95, Hipkey — $89.95, Jabra Motion — $129.95, SpareOne Plus Emergency Phone — $79.99, and SiriusXM Lynx — $299.

Holiday gift guide

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For more holiday gift ideas, please visit holiday.metronews.ca

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Timex Intelligence Quartz Linear Chronograph, $225, available at Timex.ca.

Tissot Heritage Navigator COSC 160th Anniversary, $1,795, visit tissot.ch to find a retailer.

Garmin Approach S1 GPS Golf Watch, $180, available at Indigo, indigo.ca.

KUKULAKUKU Swatch Watch, $70, available at Swatch.com.

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Holidays on the high seas

DIANE TIERNEY
For Metro

A cruise for Christmas makes a great gift for everyone from kids to grandparents. HOLLAND AMERICA PHOTO

You can still have a white Christmas in the Caribbean, Mexico or any other warm climate if you take a cruise. Most cruise lines go crazy when it comes to creating a festive atmosphere for the holidays, even if it means making fake snow and decking the decks with holiday decor.

Atriums, lobbies and lounges will be graced with gigantic Christmas trees, some soaring three decks high. Staircase banisters are draped with garlands dripping with holly. Lavish wreaths hang on doors. Stockings hang from faux fireplaces.

Cruise lines take extra delight in performing opulent holiday pageants and serving sumptuous meals to honour the season.

Plus, if your kids are worried that Santa won't find them at sea, no need. Santa has been known to parasail onto the deck, making kids think he just jumped out of his sleigh from the sky.

Family-oriented cruise lines such as Carnival, Holland America and Royal Caribbean are extra sweet at keeping spirits high.

"We traditionally see very strong demand for Christmas cruises," said Terry Thornton, senior vice-president of marketing for Carnival. "The pricing is affordable and we have ships departing from about a dozen U.S. ports to make them easy to drive to rather than fly."

The growing trend for holiday cruises is to make it a family reunion. To accommodate large groups, cruise lines have created more inter-connecting cabins, as well as condo-sized staterooms that can sleep more than one family.

"In recent years, we've hosted many more multi-generational families, from kids and grandparents to their extended family members," Thornton said.

"A cruise allows guests of all ages and interests to spend the holidays together."

Carnival features special holiday-themed entertainment, children's programs and traditional meals — turkey, mincemeat pies, eggnog and more. Passengers celebrating Hanukkah can enjoy menus with potato latkes, matzo ball soup and gefilte fish.

On Royal Caribbean, young passengers participate in gingerbread house contests, decorate Christmas cookies, make ornaments and prepare a pageant to show parents.

Holland America passengers enjoy gala feasts, caroling, holiday shows, tree lightings, visits with Santa and a variety of religious services.

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NHL

Jets rookie banned 3 games for hit

Winnipeg forward Anthony Peluso was suspended for three games for boarding Stars defenceman Alex Goligoski in the Jets' 6-4 loss to Dallas on Saturday night.

Peluso drove his shoulder into Goligoski's back at the 15:28 mark of the second period after the Stars' defenceman passed the puck up the ice and out of Dallas's end. Goligoski went face first into the boards, cutting his face.

Peluso was assessed a major penalty for boarding and a game misconduct on the play. Goligoski required 12 stitches after the hit, but returned to the ice later in the game.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

World Cup

Work on soccer stadium halted

A labour court on Sunday halted construction in part of the World Cup stadium where a man fell 35 metres to his death while working on a roofing structure in the jungle city of Manaus, further delaying the venue that will host England vs. Italy and three other matches next June.

The decision was announced after public prosecutors requested the immediate interruption of work in all areas where labourers need to be high above the ground. Work will only restart after constructors show that all safety measures are in place at the Arena Amazonia, which will also host United States vs. Portugal.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Dolphins' Michael Thomas celebrates a win-clinching interception against the Patriots in Miami on Sunday. MIKE EHRMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Fins in focus in AFC wild-card picture

NFL. After thwarting another Pats comeback with third-straight win, Miami sits in final playoff position

Desperate to stop Tom Brady's latest comeback bid, the Miami Dolphins sought help from a reserve safety making his NFL debut after being signed Tuesday off the San Francisco 49ers' practice squad.

Michael Thomas came through, intercepting Brady's fourth-down pass in the end zone with two seconds left Sunday to seal a seesaw 24-20 victory over the New England Patriots.

Thomas celebrated by flopping to his back and was swarmed by his new teammates.

"I didn't know what his first name was," defensive tackle Jared Odrick said. "That's being thrown in the fire and reacting. That's a pure athlete."

The Dolphins (8-6) won their third game in a row to help their AFC wild-card chances. They also snapped a streak of seven consecutive losses to the Patriots (10-4), who missed a chance to clinch their fifth consecutive AFC East title.

Miami's breakthrough win left even stoic second-year coach Joe Philbin in a mood to celebrate.

"I might jump in my pool," he said. "I've been in it once since I've been here."

Brady threw for 364 yards, but was frustrated by a succession of squandered scoring chances. His counterpart Ryan Tannehill shook off four sacks to throw for 312 yards and three touchdowns, including a 14-yarder to Marcus Thigpen with 1:15 left that provided the winning margin.

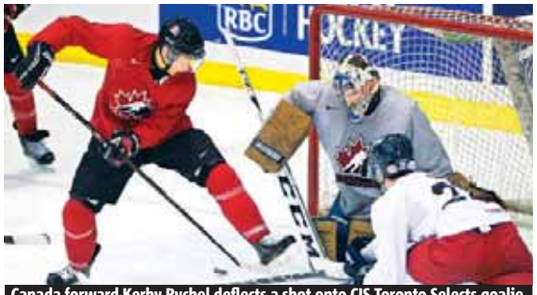
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seahawks shut out Giants

The Seattle Seahawks picked off five Eli Manning passes and manhandled the New York Giants 23-0 Sunday.

- The Seahawks (12-2) have won six times on the road, a franchise best. They're closing in on the NFC West title and their best overall record of 13-3 they achieved in 2005.

Questions follow Canada's junior team



Canada forward Kerby Rychel deflects a shot onto CIS Toronto Selects goalie Garrett Sheehan during exhibition action in Toronto on Saturday.
NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

An eager group of 25 players broke camp Sunday and got ready to head overseas for final preparations for the world junior hockey championship.

But only 22 will still be there when the tournament opens Dec. 26 in Malmo, Sweden.

Coach Brent Sutter said the final cuts — one defenceman and two forwards — will be decided on many factors, including injuries.

"They're not easy decisions, but the reality is we've got a couple or three guys banged up and we're not exactly sure," said Sutter. "Hopefully they can skate when we get over there.

"Whether they'll be ready for the first exhibition game, we're not sure. All these guys deserve to be able to push to get on the team and they're going to have a few more days to do so."

The team will play three pre-tournament games — Friday against Finland, Sunday against Sweden and the following day against Switzerland. Sutter hopes to make the cuts after the first exhibition game so he can use the full squad for the last two.

The key question is high-scoring winger Jonathan Drouin, who is recovering from a concussion but who expects to resume skating when the team arrives in Sweden on Monday.

Another is rushing defenceman Josh Morrissey, who has been nagged by an undisclosed injury for a month but who expects to be able to practise this week. THE CANADIAN PRESS

4 SPORTS

Canada's Julien Cousineau skies down for his first second-run finish in two years, and a personal-best 18th place, Sunday at the Audi FIS Alpine Ski World Cup Men's Slalom in Val-d'Isere, France. ALEXIS BOICHARD/AGENCE ZOOM/GETTY IMAGES

Comeback kid Cousineau puts injury behind

Two-year ordeal over. Breakthrough 18th-place finish in France his best ever

Canada's Julien Cousineau put the finishing touches on a long and difficult road back from injury in Sunday's World Cup slalom, qualifying for his first second run since 2011 and securing his first-ever top-30 finish.

The 32-year-old from Lachute, Que., attacked from the back to jump from 56th to ninth after the first run, then finish 18th overall, with his teammate Mike Janyk of Whistler, B.C., close behind him in 21st.

Cousineau's standout performance represented a huge personal victory after two difficult years in which he first battled back from injury then failed to qualify for a second run in a World Cup race.

"It's been a long time. It's good for my head and it's good for the team," said Cousineau, who clocked a two-run combined time of one minute 46.30 seconds. "I just skied like I've been doing all summer and ended up with a great time.

"It's fun to finally be able to show what I've been doing in training instead of just talking about it."

Starting 56th on a course that deteriorated as the race went on, Cousineau finished in the top 10 in his first run.

"I didn't think it was that good. It felt rough and I was fighting all the way down," Cousineau said of his first run. "When I crossed the line and saw the position I was like, 'Wow.' I was pretty excited. A lot of stress lifted with that."

"I haven't made a second run since December 21 in 2011. I hurt my knee after that."

Janyk needed a top-12 result to earn a spot at the Sochi Games, but struggled with a stomach bug.

"I was pretty green this morning," said Janyk, who had a two-run combined time of 1:46.49 and was the second-fastest racer in the top section of the second run.

Veran Mario Matt, of Austria, took the win in 1:44.59. Sweden's Mattias Hargin was second (1:45.12) and Italy's Patrick Thaler was third (1:45.37).

Calgary's Brad Spence was 36th after the first run — less than four-tenths of a second out of qualifying for the second run — as he continues his comeback from a long-term injury. Toronto's Phil Brown and Paul Stutz, of Banff, Alta., did not finish their first runs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Finish line

Canadians' weekend highlights in other disciplines.

- **Biathlon World Cup** Canadian Nathan Smith finished eighth in a World Cup of biathlon pursuit event on Sunday, a day after guaranteeing a spot at the 2014 Winter Olympics.
- **Giant slalom World Cup** Canadian Marie-Michele Gagnon saw her hopes of a first giant slalom World Cup podium slip through her fingers Sunday when she slid out in the second run, while countryman Marie-Pier Prefontaine posted a solid 19th-place result.
- **Skicross World Cup** Canadian Marielle Thompson won the women's small final on Sunday to finish fifth and retain the overall leader's bib.

Winter Olympics

France's top authorities 'have no plans' to go to Sochi Games

France's foreign minister says that neither he nor the president nor other top officials plan to attend the Sochi Olympics.

Laurent Fabius said on Sunday that "top French authorities have no plans" to attend the games in the Russian Black Sea resort.

President Francois Hollande's office said that "nothing is planned at this stage" and referred to the comments by Fabius on Europe 1 radio and iTele.

A week ago, German President Joachim Gauck said he was not attending the Olympic Games.

Russia's human-rights record, including a new anti-gay law, has led to calls in the West for a boycott of the Games that are Russian President Vladimir Putin's pet project. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Snowboarding. Regina's McMorris wins season's first medal in style: Gold

Regina's Mark McMorris opened the snowboarding season with a gold-medal performance in slopestyle at the Dew Tour on Sunday in Breckenridge, Colo.

McMorris took first place in the 17-man field with 97.80 points, 6.80 points ahead of Sven Thorgren of Sweden. Maxence Parrot of Bromont, Que., finished third with 89.00.

Montreal's Sebastien Toutant placed fourth with 87.60 points.

After a fall in qualifying, McMorris collected 95.00 points in his first run of the final, which featured his signature straight double backflip, and a backside 1080 double cork. He capped his second run with a 1440 triple cork.

"I had nothing to lose. I told myself everything was going perfect and I had to do a triple," said McMorris.

For the 19-year-old Parrot, Sunday's performance marked his first career medal in three years on the circuit.

Mark McMorris, of Regina. DOUG PENSINGER/GETTY IMAGES

"It's great to finally get on the podium," Parrot said.

Slopestyle snowboarding will make its Olympic debut in Sochi in 2014, with McMorris already named to Canada's squad.

American snowboarding star Shaun White was forced to drop out of Sunday's event after injuring his ankle on a fall in the halfpipe finals on Saturday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	33	22	9	2	92	70	46
Montreal	35	20	12	3	88	75	43
Tampa Bay	33	19	11	3	90	80	41
Detroit	35	15	11	9	89	94	39
Toronto	34	17	14	3	97	99	37
Ottawa	34	13	15	6	96	111	32
Florida	34	12	17	5	78	109	29
Buffalo	33	7	23	3	55	96	17

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	34	23	10	1	105	74	47
Washington	33	18	12	3	105	97	39
Carolina	34	14	13	7	79	94	35
Columbus	33	14	15	4	85	92	32
Philadelphia	33	14	15	4	76	91	32
New Jersey	34	13	15	6	78	85	32
NY Rangers	33	15	17	1	72	88	31
NY Islanders	34	9	19	6	83	118	24

Sunday's results
Washington 5 Philadelphia 4 (SO)
Tampa Bay 3 Detroit 0
Florida 2 Montreal 1
Calgary at NY Rangers
Los Angeles at Chicago
Edmonton at Anaheim

Saturday's results
Calgary 2 Buffalo 1 (OT)
Los Angeles 5 Ottawa 2
Dallas 6 Winnipeg 4
Toronto 7 Chicago 3
St. Louis 4 Columbus 3 (OT)
Pittsburgh 4 Detroit 1
New Jersey 3 Tampa Bay 0
Montreal 1 NY Islanders 0 (OT)
Carolina 3 Phoenix 1
Nashville 3 San Jose 2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	35	23	7	5	132	100	51
St. Louis	31	22	6	3	110	73	47
Colorado	31	21	9	1	88	73	43
Minnesota	35	19	11	5	81	81	43
Dallas	31	15	11	5	90	93	35
Nashville	33	16	14	3	77	92	35
Winnipeg	34	14	15	5	90	100	33

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	34	22	7	5	108	87	49
Los Angeles	33	22	7	4	93	65	48
San Jose	33	20	7	6	108	82	46
Vancouver	35	20	10	5	98	83	45
Phoenix	32	18	9	5	104	100	41
Calgary	32	13	15	4	83	102	30
Edmonton	34	11	20	3	91	117	25

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Minnesota 2 Colorado 1 (SO)
Vancouver 6 Boston 2

Monday's games — All Times Eastern
Winnipeg at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
St. Louis at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Dallas at Colorado, 9 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pts
Crosby, Pgh	18	28	46
Kane, Chi	19	25	44
Malkin, Pgh	9	32	41
Getzlaf, Ana	16	22	38
Tavares, NYI	13	24	37
Perry, Ana	21	15	36
Ovechkin, Wash	26	9	35
Steen, StL	22	13	35

Not including last night's games

NFL

WEEK 15

Sunday's results
Chicago 38 Cleveland 31
Buffalo 27 Jacksonville 20
Atlanta 27 Washington 26
San Francisco 33 Tampa Bay 14
Seattle 23 N.Y. Giants 0
Minnesota 48 Philadelphia 30
Miami 24 New England 20
Indianapolis 25 Houston 3
Carolina 30 N.Y. Jets 20
Kansas City 56 Oakland 31
Arizona 37 Tennessee 34 (OT)
St. Louis 27 New Orleans 16
Green Bay 37 Dallas 36
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh

Monday's game — All Times Eastern
Baltimore at Detroit, 8:40 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	20	3	.870	—
d-Miami	17	6	.739	3
Atlanta	12	12	.500	8 1/2
d-Boston	11	14	.440	10
Detroit	11	14	.440	10
Charlotte	10	14	.417	10 1/2
Toronto	9	13	.409	10 1/2
Chicago	9	13	.409	10 1/2
Washington	9	13	.409	10 1/2
Cleveland	9	14	.391	11
Brooklyn	8	15	.348	12
New York	7	16	.304	13
Orlando	7	16	.304	13
Philadelphia	7	18	.280	14
Milwaukee	5	19	.208	15 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Portland	21	4	.840	—
d-San Antonio	19	4	.826	1
Oklahoma City	18	4	.818	1 1/2
d-L.A. Clippers	16	9	.640	5
Houston	16	9	.640	5
Phoenix	13	9	.591	6 1/2
Denver	13	9	.591	6 1/2
Dallas	14	10	.583	6 1/2
Golden State	13	11	.542	7 1/2
New Orleans	11	10	.524	8
Minnesota	12	12	.500	8 1/2
L.A. Lakers	11	12	.478	9
Memphis	10	13	.435	10
Sacramento	7	15	.318	12 1/2
Utah	6	20	.231	15 1/2

d - division leader

Sunday's results
Portland 111 Detroit 109 (OT)
Sacramento 106 Houston 91
Minnesota 101 Memphis 93
Orlando at Oklahoma City
New Orleans at Denver
Golden State at Phoenix

Monday's games — All Times Eastern
Detroit at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Utah at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Orlando at Chicago, 8 p.m.
San Antonio at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

Tuesday's games
Portland at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
Sacramento at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Denver, 9 p.m.
New Orleans at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Family and financial problems can easily be resolved over the next seven days, but you must not keep putting them off.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Speak up if you have something important to say but make sure you listen too because the feedback you get could be invaluable.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You may have to bluff your way through the sort of situation you would usually cope with quite easily today.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
As some of your views are a bit controversial there could be some interesting skirmishes today. But don't make a scene if someone who disagrees with you challenges your grasp of the facts.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Others may be having second thoughts about what you are doing but you have no such doubts. Even if you do make a mistake or two along the way your momentum and sense of purpose will keep you moving towards your goal.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Your confidence is sky-high at the moment and because of that you are ready to risk almost anything to prove you are the best. Before the day is over even your critics will be singing your praises and willing you to succeed.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will get your way on the work front easily enough today but you may upset a few people along the way. That won't worry you in the slightest.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You will be rather outspoken today, which is not that unusual, but make sure your criticisms are justified or you could make enemies of people who should be your friends.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Mercury combined with your ruler Jupiter warns that what others tell you and what they believe may be two completely different things.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You don't lack for ideas at the moment but you seem strangely reluctant to let the world know about them. Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The answers you seek are not that hard to find but you will surely find them quicker today if you get some assistance. And don't make things too complicated for yourself.

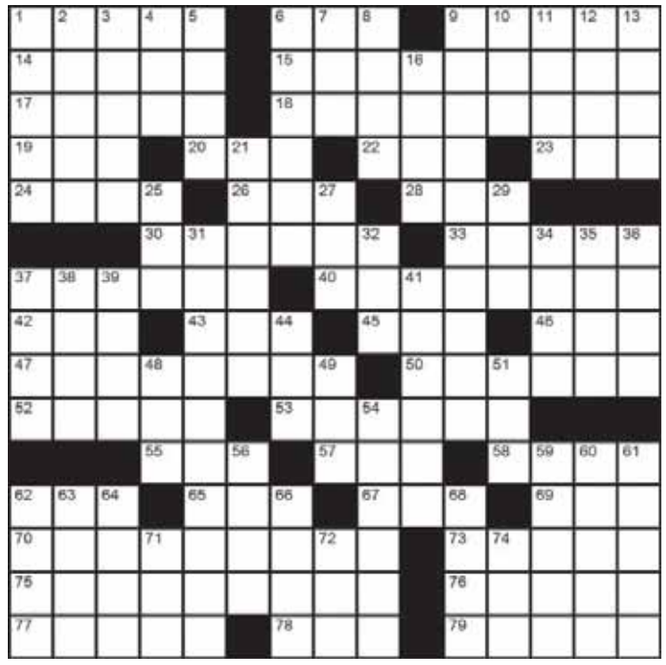
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You must check facts and figures carefully today as Mercury linked to retrograde Jupiter warns that either someone is trying to deceive you or you will in some way deceive yourself.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



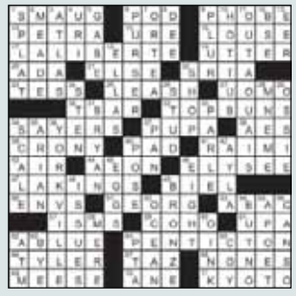
Across

1. Anna Paquin movie, "The __" (1993)
6. Ms. Gardner
9. Impudent
14. Christmas Tree topper
15. Anti-aging cream targets: 2 wds.
17. NWT: __ Heritage Trail
18. Canada Dry __ __
19. Farm animal
20. Sports fig.
22. "__ _ Married an Axe Murderer" (1993)
23. Li'l water channel
24. Sun., on Mon.
26. Mr. Kilmer
28. Mil. rank
30. Festive beverage
33. Wuthering Heights growth
37. Chachi's surname
40. Author who co-founded the Writers' Trust of Canada in 1976, Margaret __ (b.1926 - d.1987)
42. "Yahoo!"
43. Ms. Thurman
45. Li'l pressure unit
46. Ceiling
47. Fun street in downtown Montreal
50. Pre-Christmas time
52. Mr. Spock's father
53. Formal order
55. Clairvoyance, e.g.
57. Total
58. Yielded
62. "Law & Order: _ _ _"
65. Rum __ Tugger (Cats character)
67. Cereal grass
69. Farm call
70. Popular posting-up stuff website
73. Do computer cleaning
75. Merchants
76. On _ __ (Doing well)
77. __ statement
78. Home reno network
79. Paint finish kind

Down

1. Joshua Jackson's "Dawson's Creek" role
2. Floored: 2 wds.
3. Ms. Moorehead
4. Paleo opposite
5. Stewing pot
6. Blanket type
7. Ancient 7
8. Ms. Jillian's
9. Wintertime fun: 2 wds.
10. "__ Bud" (1997)
11. Actress Ms. Merkel's
12. Boston basket-baller, briefly
13. River of Flanders
16. "__ & Icons" (Vintage show from MuchMusic)
21. "Let's Make a Deal" = _ _ __ show
25. Racecar driver Mr. Fabi
27. Miley Cyrus movie
29. Casual shirt
31. Well-known from daytime TV, Canadian designer Brian who has a home furnishings line
32. Discontinuity
34. 'Appear' suffix
35. _-__ Highway
36. It means 'Seven'
37. Bows
38. Uncommon, to Caesar
39. Alicia's role in "Clueless" (1995)
41. Elvis became a Private in it in '58: 2 wds.
44. Moreover
48. Check
49. Some football positions, e.g.
51. Non-carnivore, e.g.
54. Respectful gesture when meeting The Queen
56. Knit one __ two...
59. Monastery boss
60. Cat burglar's target
61. Bird of Jove
62. Li'l season [pl.]
63. Opinion
64. Do __ others...
66. Olde-style reward
68. Wax-coated cheese
71. Asphalt
72. __ Lanka
74. Big time

Friday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Friday's Sudoku

1	6	5	7	4	2	3	8	9
4	2	3	9	5	8	1	6	7
9	7	8	3	1	6	2	5	4
7	3	9	5	2	1	8	4	6
6	1	4	8	9	3	7	2	5
8	5	2	6	7	4	9	1	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
5	8	6	1	3	9	4	7	2
2	9	1	4	6	7	5	3	8

	2				9			
9			3	2		4	6	
4		8					2	
	9	3		8				
			1		5			
				6		5	9	
	7					2		3
	3	2		7	1			4
			8				1	

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